

I. M. Andreyevsky: 'Russia's Catacomb Saints' – The Catacomb Church, Part 1

📅 March 18, 2017 👤 admin ➡ New-Martyrs

Dear Readers, we are reprinting the monumental work 'Russia's Catacomb Saints', inspired by Professor Ivan Mikhailovich Andreyevsky, pen name Ivan Andreyev, on our parish website.

It is our aim to each week publish one section of the book. You can view, or download, the book, 'Russia's Catacomb Saints', in its entirety [here](#).

Part I of the book has been written, in the '50, by Professor Andreyevsky. Father Seraphim Rose translated Part I, and expanded the material, adding almost 600 more pages to the original book in the '70 and early '80.

The majority of the text is based on official statements, and personal accounts of many hierarchs, priests, and lay people belonging to the Catacomb Church. To read, the full list of sources, please, refer to pages 610 – 625 of the book.

We encourage you to read about the extraordinary ROAD TO THE TRUTH traveled by Professor Andreyevsky, pages 23 – 41 of the book.

Below, is part one, the 'Introduction' to 'The Catacomb Church'.

Now, let us embark on a journey of NO COMPROMISE, traveled by so many men and women to martyrdom for their steadfast FAITH with the dedication by the editor himself:

***'This book is dedicated to the Christian Martyrs
TODAY IN RUSSIA TOMORROW IN AMERICA'***

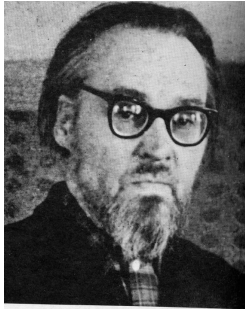
Introduction*

In recent years a marvelous witness has come out of the enslaved Soviet Union: a long series of protests from Orthodox laymen—and a few of the clergy—against the continued persecution of the Christian faithful by the Soviet



ARCHIVES

Government and by its 'State Church,' the Moscow Patriarchate.



But how can this be?—a 'Church' that persecutes its own faithful? The layman Boris Talantov, now in prison in the USSR for 'anti-Governmental activity,' has carefully analyzed this question and found the explanation to lie in 'Sergianism,' i.e., the attitude of those who accept the principle of

the 'Declaration' made by Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 *that the Soviet Union's "joys and successes are our joys and successes, and its misfortunes are our misfortunes," which in effect made the Moscow Patriarchate the obedient tool of Communist purposes, which function it has continued to serve down to the present day. Boris Talantov in a recent article has stated that "the roots of the serious ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were planted precisely by Patriarch Sergius... Objectively, this address (the Declaration of 1927) and the ensuing activity of Metr. Sergius was a betrayal of the Church."* Further, according to Talantov, most of the churches that remained open after the persecution of the '30's no longer recognized Metropolitan Sergius as their head.**

It is these clergies and laymen who do not recognize the official 'Moscow Patriarchate' who comprise the underground or 'Catacomb Church' in the USSR. It is today an 'illegal' Church in the USSR and for obvious reasons very little can be said about its present extent, organization, etc. But there are nonetheless at least three sources of reliable information about it: (1) the letters and petitions of bishops and delegations of clergy and laymen who protested the Declaration in 1927 and broke off communion with the official Soviet Church—these hierarchs and faithful were apparently in the majority, and the Soviet Church attained its present ascendancy and 'canonicity' in the USSR through the Government's arrest and murder of the leading anti-Sergianists; (2) statements in the recent Soviet press concerning the arrest and imprisonment of members of underground churches and monasteries belonging to the 'True Orthodox Church' of 'Tikhonites' who refuse to recognize the Moscow Patriarchate; the Communist Government considers this Church of such importance that it published a general account and historical summary of it in the 'Atheist Dictionary,' printed in Moscow in 1964 for the guidance of anti-religious activists; (3) the statements of those who have been members of the Catacomb Church in the USSR and have then come to the West. The united testimony of these sources leads one to the conclusion that the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union is a submerged iceberg, a reality of which only a small portion is visible on the surface. Only when Russia, in God's time, will be freed from the tyranny of Communism and its obedient 'Patriarchate' will the secret life of Russian Orthodoxy be made fully known.

THE REALITY OF LIFE in the Soviet Union is a frightful nightmare that can neither be understood nor believed by those who have not experienced it. And the most frightful thing is not the material deprivations, arrests, and banishments, but rather the fact that **a conscious, systematic, and diabolically ingenious battle is being waged for the possession of the human soul, against God.** This is the chief aim, and everything else is subordinated to it.

Qualitatively the forerunners of Antichrist have already made his kingdom a reality there. The actual Antichrist will devise nothing *new*: it will only remain for him to disseminate the methods of the

Soviet NKVD (Secret Police) to the other five-sixths of the earth's surface.

The only bright, joyful, and

encouraging phenomenon there is the existence of the Catacomb Church, the Church of the wilderness. It permits us to evaluate optimistically the battle of the Russian soul with atheism: there, the infallible Church has been preserved, against which, as Christ has promised us, the gates of hell shall not prevail.

I cannot name many names and events. For understandable reasons, I cannot describe much in detail. I can only say very briefly or hint. But I also cannot be silent altogether; I do not have the right and I do not wish to, since by my silence I would betray the Truth and memory of the priest-martyrs whom I have seen, with whom I have spoken, and with whom I shared five frightful years of imprisonment in the concentration camp at Solovki.



Patriarch Tikhon wisely conducted the ship of the Church on the sea of life, which had become agitated by the Revolution. His situation was extraordinarily difficult, not only because he was constantly threatened by physical danger, not even

because for all seven years of his patriarchate he passed every day through moral tortures, but chiefly because there has never been such a situation in the Church's history. He had to lay out a completely new road across the unknown country. This is why his errors are so understandable and so forgivable. And his merit is all the greater in that he foresaw and laid the foundation of the Catacomb Church: while alive he blessed the physician-psychiatrist, Professor Zhizhilenko, to found the Catacomb Church. Later Professor Zhizhilenko, working under the Soviets as a physician, received a secret tonsure and was a bishop of the Catacomb Church, being subsequently arrested, imprisoned, and in 1930, shot.

After the death of the Patriarch, his successors one after the other were banished. And then Metropolitan Sergius, becoming head of the Church, published the Declaration known to everyone, which acknowledged the joys and sorrows of the Soviets as his own and declared all martyrs political criminals.



All Orthodox Russia was shaken, and delegations with protests extended to Metr. Sergius from all corners of the land.

As a member of such a delegation from the Petrograd Diocese, I too came to Moscow. In the Metropolitan's reception room forty people were waiting, and every one of whom I asked his reason for coming replied that he had come as a delegate to see the Metropolitan. Russia had not accepted this Declaration!

The Metropolitan received us out of order. Finding out the reason why we had come, he reaffirmed everything written in the Declaration, and in answer to our convictions called us 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'schismatics.' Not taking his blessing, we left without obtaining anything.



Soon the churches that did not accept the Declaration began to be closed. In Petrograd, only one remained, but everyone who entered it was registered and later arrested. This was the time when the atheist Soviet power demanded of believers that they go to churches of the official Church.

I, too, was arrested and banished for five years. At Solovki I encountered many hierarchs of the true Church. And there we already had our Catacomb church.



In the concentration camps the persecution against faith was completely open: priests were shorn and shaved, forbidden to wear cassocks and crosses. For making the sign of the cross a new term of imprisonment was given. Of course, there was no question of any open services. The relics of saints were

exhibited for mockery in an anti-religious museum with blasphemous inscriptions—even the saints suffered with us! The monks of Solovki who remained there as specialist-laborers were forbidden to have any contact with the prisoners under penalty of death. It was especially difficult before great feasts: it was impossible to gather even in twos, no one was

allowed anywhere without special passes, night rounds were made more frequent, sentries were doubled. In order to pray one had to be ready at any minute for a martyr's death. And we were ready for it, always carrying with us, like the first Christians, a Particle of the Holy Gifts. I brought such a Particles abroad and gave it to Metropolitan Anastassy.

And not only were we ready to die, but many did die, confident that somewhere there, outside the reach of the Soviet authorities, where there is freedom—there the Truth was shining in all its purity. There people were living by it and submitting to it. There people did not bow down to Antichrist. And what terror overwhelmed me when, fairly recently, I managed to come abroad and found out that some people here 'spiritually' recognize the Soviet Church. *Spiritually!* Many of us there fell, 'for fear of the Jews,' or giving in to the temptation of outward cooperation with the authorities. I knew priests of the official Church who, at home, tore their hair out, who smashed their heads making prostrations, begging forgiveness for their apostasy, calling themselves Cain—but nonetheless they did not have the strength to decide upon martyrdom. But even they *spiritually* did not recognize the Red Church. But these others abroad — it is precisely *spiritually* that they submit to it. What good fortune that our priest-martyrs, in dying, did not find out about this betrayal!***

When I returned from banishment (to Leningrad) I found the Catacomb Church. I personally know about 200 places where services were conducted. Twelve traveling priests and two bishops served them. These places were quite diverse: from peasant huts right to Soviet institutions, to which one was admitted only by pass. But at that time the Catacomb Church did not have any general interconnecting organization.

Having gotten abroad, I naturally began to seek out people who had belonged to the Catacomb Church. Most of the refugees knew nothing about it. But almost every year I have encountered at least one representative of it, even priests, and I have had written contact with a bishop.

According to my information, the Catacomb Church now has not only become stronger but has also obtained some kind of organizational forms. According to one bishop, although there are comparatively few active members of the Catacomb Church, the vast majority of the people sympathize with and help them. Without this sympathy in Soviet conditions, the Catacomb Church could not exist at all.



Abroad I have been struck by the circumstance that most of the clergy of the Catacomb Church who have come here continue to remain in secret, not even entering the true—Synodal—Church. This greatly disturbed me: was I then mistaken in entering the Russian Church Outside of

Russia? And if not, then why do they remain in secret? And then, recently, I received an answer to my perplexity: A bishop of the Catacomb Church, unknown to me, who is living abroad, sent me through a third person a letter. He speaks first in principle about my articles, which he had read in *Orthodox Russia*, and in general about the correctness of my position. Then he gives an answer, as it were, to my doubts. He says that the clergy of the Catacomb Church often do not enter the Russian Church Outside of Russia—which has not erred in its relationship to atheistic Communism—because the battle is still raging, and who can say whether it will not be necessary for them to apply their experience here, in the West. The forerunners of Antichrist have already appeared and no one knows when the time will come when every believer, without entering the house, will have to flee into the mountains, i.e., go into the Catacombs. And he is right; are there not those who wish to annihilate the Russian Church Outside of Russia? Concerning this, those who have gone away from her have already spoken the first word. And if this were to happen—we pray that the Lord will not allow this!—where would we then find refuge, where would we find the infallible Church? Already almost all of the Local Orthodox Churches have either bowed down to the forerunners of Antichrist or give a ‘brotherly embrace’ to his loyal servants!

Today there is not and there cannot be any separation between ecclesiastical affairs and politics. Politics pretends to universality, i.e., it wishes to take into its hands the resolution of questions concerning spiritual life also. This means that political actions cannot be indifferent for the Church as well. Furthermore, when Antichrist shall have power on the earth, he will naturally be a political figure. This means that the Church also will have to oppose his political persecution. And so as, even now, to weaken this opposition, his forerunners, taking advantage of the idea that the Church should be above politics, conceal their warfare against God under a political cloak: the martyrs are ‘political criminals.’ To be sure, the Church should not intrigue, but as soon as politics touches on questions of spiritual life, the Church cannot close her eyes to this.



This is why the question of the battle against Communism is a question of the spirit, and not of politics. This is why the question of our jurisdictional divisions is not a question of ‘quarrels of bishops over portfolios.’ No, it is a question of cooperation (or tacit agreement) with the forerunners of Antichrist, or else

uncompromising battle against them. This alone separates us from those who have broken away from the Truth; but it does not separate us from the Russian people, for there the soul, even if it is invisible, even if it has retreated within itself, is still alive, is not *spiritually* enslaved; it is drawn to the light of Truth. And a testimony of this is the existence, in the frightful conditions of the Soviet Union, where there are many Judases out of fear and others out of conscience, of a Catacomb Church that has *not* fallen.

* *The 'Introduction', written by Father Seraphim Rose, 1970.*

** *John B. Dunlop, The Recent Activities of the Moscow Patriarchate, St. Nectarios Educational Series, no. 46, 1970, pp. 109, 113-4.*

* * *The Soviets, in connection with the recent triumph of their Sergianist Church in gaining recognition from the American Metropolia, have tried to deprive the faithful even of this consolation: Two young hierarchs of the Metropolis, Bps. Vladimir of Tokyo and Theodosius of Sitka, have visited the "Mother Church" in the USSR, the latter—as the Metropolia press reports—being followed everywhere by great crowds of people, as if to tell the faithful: abandon hope in any free Russian Church abroad—its hierarchs are with your oppressors!*

Photographs:

1. Boris Talantov
2. Solovki Concentration Camp
3. Patriarch Tikhon, 1923
4. Physician-Psychiatrist Professor Zhizhilenko later Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov
5. Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky
6. Metropolitan Anastassy Gribanovsky
7. I. M. Andreyevsky teaching in class of the Holy Trinity Seminary, 1958
8. I. M. Andreyevsky in his monastery cell, Jordanville
9. Header: 'Russia's Catacomb Saints', book cover, published 1982

Source: '[Russia's Catacomb Saints](#)', Lives of the New Martyrs by Professor I. M. Andreyevsky.

'Russia's Catacomb Saints' Boris Talantov Father Seraphim Rose
Lives of the New Martyrs by Professor I. M. Andreyevskiy (Pen name: Ivan Andreyev)
Metropolitan Anastassy Gribanovsky Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky
Physician-Psychiatrist Professor Zhizhilenko later Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov
The Catacomb Church The Russian Catacomb Church
The Solovki Concentration Camp

◀ Новомученики и исповедники Русской Православной Церкви XX века – Отец Сергей Сидоров

I. M. Andreyevsky: '[Russia's Catacomb Saints](#)' – Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov, Part 2 ➤

MENOLOGION

Today is: Monday, 03 March 2020
(7528) [Monday, March 16, 2020 on the civil calendar]
Today the Church celebrates:

Monday of the Third Week of Lent; Tone VI ● Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus of Amasea († c. 308); New Venerable Martyr Martha and Martyr Michael († 1938); Venerable Virgin Piama († 337); Sts. Zeno and Zoilus; Icon of the Mother of God of Volokolamsk (1572)
Fasting: Xerophagy **Scripture Reading:** Isa

